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ABSTRACT

Through readings and activities contained in this booklet, which is part of the "What If...Series," secondary students and adults learn about how a bill becomes a law and at the same time acquire effective coping skills. By using the materials, students will learn who makes laws, what laws are about, when and where laws are made, and how an idea becomes a law. The materials can be used in secondary classes and in naturalization and High School Equivalency Programs. The booklets are written at two reading levels -- Set 1 at grade 4,5 and Set 2 at grade 7,8 -- but content activities and paging of both sets are the same. The booklet contains concise reading selections followed by questions which the student is expected to answer in writing. Students are given tips for writing to their state legislator and are asked to compose a letter. In other booklet activities students fill in charts and write a short story. Reading and writing skills are emphasized. Optional activities described in the Teacher Guide (SO 012 329) include having students post news articles concerning major legislative issues on a bulletin board, conducting a lobbying role play, inviting legislators and lobbyists to explain their respective roles in the lawmaking process, and visiting a legislative session as a class field trip. Teacher training in the use of the materials can be arranged by contacting the Institute for Political and Legal Education. (Author/RM)

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WHAT IF...YOU FEEL "THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW"?

--ONE OF A SERIES OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES--
STUDENT BOOKLET - SET I

SP012332

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Words to Know

amend (v)	to change or correct
amendment (n)	a change or addition
bill	a draft of a law
constitutent	a person living in a law maker's district
debate (n)	a discussion held according to certain rules
introduce (v)	to bring in for the first time to bring in for discussion
law	a bill passed by the lawmaking body
legislature	a group of elected law makers which passes or vetoes bills
lobbyist	a person who works for either the passage or defeat of a bill
repeal	to remove a law passed earlier
requirement (legal)	something needed as defined by law
veto	to reject, or disapprove

WHAT IF ... YOU FEEL "THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW"?

Have you ever thought to yourself: "There ought to be a law about that"? What about when the street department's snow plow covers your sidewalk or driveway with more snow? What about when the neighbor's dog barks just as you are dropping off for a nap? If you feel that "there ought to be a law" about those or other problems, you need to find out how laws are made. Then you will be able to get laws passed to help you. Certain skills are useful in influencing law makers (legislators). You need to decide which issues are important. You need to get the law makers' attention. You need to tell them your ideas. And you need to remind the them that, as a citizen, you can help in the legislative process.

In what ways can you influence law makers and the legislative process?

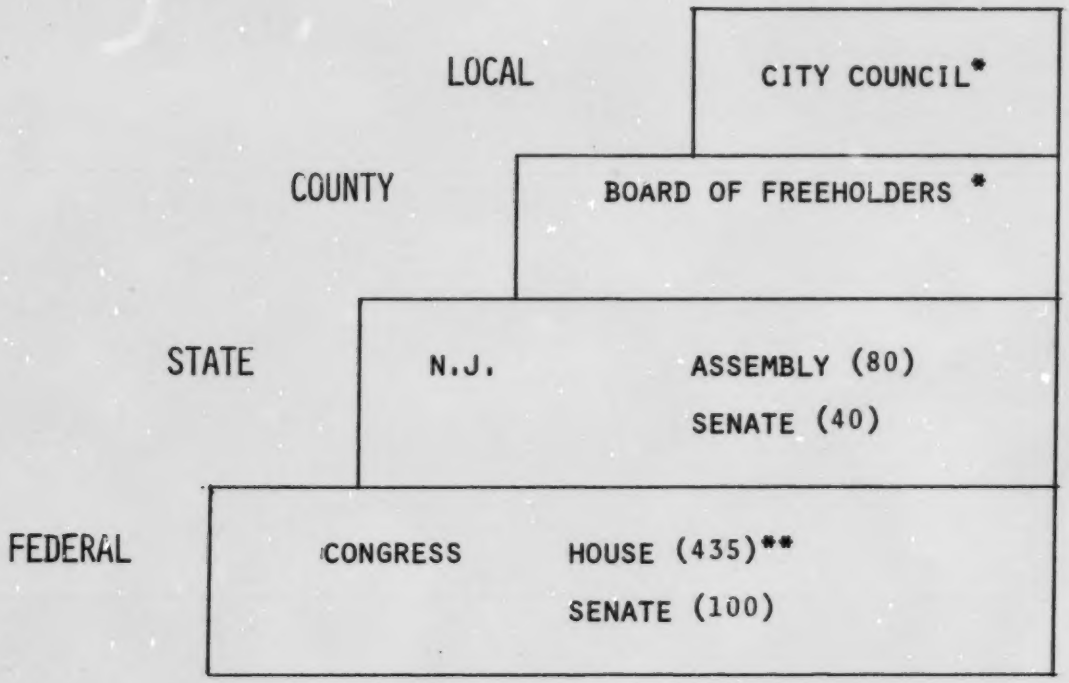
- - You can let your representatives know what you think about proposed laws.
- - You can write or call your legislators with your ideas for laws.
- - You can be a citizen lobbyist (a person who influences law makers).

But to do these things, you must know the "who, what, where, when, and how" of law making.

Who makes laws?
What are laws about?
When and where are laws passed?
How does an idea become a law?

You will learn the answers to these questions in this booklet. With this information you can be a more effective citizen. Then you will able to better influence your legislators, if you feel "there ought to be a law."

LEVELS OF LEGISLATORS



* Number varies. Not less than 3 nor usually more than 9.

** The number is now set at 435 by law. House seats are divided among the 50 states according to the number of people who live there. The federal government counts the people (takes a "census") every 10 years. Then the number of representatives for each state is decided.

WHO MAKES LAWS?

Our laws are made for us by people we elect to office. They are called law makers or legislators. Some of them serve in your city or town. Some serve at the state level. Some are elected by the voters to serve in Washington, D.C., at the federal level. (See the chart on the opposite page.) All of them are elected to make laws controlling our actions and serving our needs.

These law makers, or legislators, differ from one another. They come from different races, religions, cultures, and beliefs. Some work in business. Some are lawyers. Some are farmers. These women and men differ from one another. But in one important way they are alike: they have been elected by the voters to serve the interests of the voters. Their job is to represent you and to pass laws for you. Do you know who they are?

Do you know:

who makes laws affecting your life?
how you can contact these law makers?
what committees they serve on?
what they think about issues that are important to you?

The Activity on the next two pages will help you get this information. You will be studying your law makers (legislators) at three levels - local, state, and federal. Some facts can be gotten from your public library. For other facts, you may need to phone the law maker's office. Find out how your legislator feels about:

Inflation (Have you noticed prices rising lately?)
Employment (Has anyone you know lost his job recently?)
Taxes (How much money in taxes do you pay each year?)
Education (Do you think it is a good idea for adults to go to school? Is it good for children? Why?)
Energy (Has the cost of heating your home gone up? Why?)
Pollution (How do you feel about breathing smokey air?)

ACTIVITY A Your Law Makers: Who are They? What is their Stand on important Issues?

Fill in the chart below. You can get help from the phone book and the public library. The law maker's office can help. Phone it. Also, phone the League of Women Voters. They are happy to get information for you.

OFFICE	NAME ADDRESS-PHONE	POLITICAL PARTY	YEARS IN OFFICE	COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS	STAND ON ISSUES
U. S. Senators from New Jersey	#1 #2				
U. S. Congressional Representative (Your district)					

State Senator (Your district)				
State Assembly Member (Your district)				
City Council Member (Your City)				

But not everyone can run for the office of law maker or legislator. You must be of a certain age. The age limit depends upon the office. You must be a citizen of the United States. And you must live in the state and district from which you will run for office. In fact, these requirements are like those needed for voting: age, being a citizen, and being a resident.

At the federal level, the requirements for senator and representative are:

To be a senator, you must be:

at least 30 years old
a citizen for at least 9 years
a resident of the state

To be a representative, you must be:

at least 25 years old
a citizen for at least 7 years
a resident of the state and district you will represent

State and local election laws have requirements like the federal ones above. In recent years, many states have changed their age requirements. They now allow a voter 18 years or older to run for the office of legislator. As a result, a number of younger law makers have been elected.

What do you think about having younger law makers? Will they represent you the way you want them to? And do you think that there should be other requirements for those who run for office? Are age, being a citizen, and being a resident enough as requirements? In the next two Activities, you will be thinking about these questions.

ACTIVITY B Is 18 old enough to be a State Representative?
What do you think?

In New Jersey, the age of majority - the legal age for voting, entering into a contract, getting married or drinking - is 18 years old. But you have to be 21 years old to be elected to the State Assembly.

Write your opinion on whether or not 18 year olds should be allowed to serve in the Assembly.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Find out the opinions of some other people. Write the opinion of someone who disagrees with you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you feel strongly enough on this question to write your state law makers?

Yes_____ No _____ Why?_____

_____

_____

ACTIVITY C Requirements for Law Makers: Are age, being a citizen, and being a resident enough?

Think about this question. Should there be more requirements? Should there be fewer? Write why you agree or disagree with the requirements that we have. What other legal requirements might we have?

Ask another person for their opinion. Write it here:

Compare your opinion with the other person's. Did you agree?

Yes ____ No ____

If not, did either of you change your mind after listening to the the other person?

Yes ____ No ____

WHAT ARE LAWS ABOUT?

Laws are written on many subjects. These laws affect almost every aspect of our lives. They are made for us by the people we elect to represent us, our legislators. The laws are passed to protect us: our health, our safety, and our general welfare. The subject of these laws may differ according to the level at which the law maker serves - federal, state, or local. On the federal level, a U. S. Senator may vote on a law to require a health warning printed on each pack of cigarettes. At the local level, the city council member may vote to leash all dogs.

In Washington, D.C., then, law makers pass laws that affect all Americans. They have the power

to declare war
to raise an army
to collect taxes
to control trade
to set up post offices
to set up courts
to provide roads
to borrow money

All these powers were given to the law makers by the Constitution. When it was written, some needs, like those above, were clearly understood. But the need for others was not felt at the time. Since then, times have changed. Congress has had to make new laws.

It draws its power to make new laws from a certain phrase in the Constitution. The phrase states that Congress "can make all the laws that are necessary and proper" for carrying out the powers of the Government. Some people call it the elastic clause. It has been used to give Congress broad power to make laws in new areas.

There may be more laws affecting your life than you imagine. The next activity, You and the Law, calls for thinking about the law and how many laws are part of your everyday life.

ACTIVITY D You and the Law. How much does the law affect your life?

Write a short story about yourself. Describe a typical day. Start with getting up in the morning. Give facts about yourself, your home, your work, and your school.

Reread your story on the last page. List as many things as you can that are affected by law.

For example:

1. Your name - a legal requirement; written on your birth certificate.

2. Your home - affected by zoning laws, - - What else? Can you name more laws that affect your home?

Legislator's News Letters
- Give information on laws
- Seek your opinions

Law makers want voters to understand major issues. Some write news letters explaining certain facts. Sometimes they ask you to give your opinions. Your opinions will help the law maker represent you.

The activities on the next few pages are based on news letters sent to voters in New Jersey. By doing these activities you will understand how law makers give information and get your views.

ACTIVITY E "Washington Report" What does it tell the Voter?

Ask your teacher for the cassette tape which goes with this activity. Then read the 'Report' on the next page. Listen to the tape at the same time. The tape will help you read it. Now, answer the questions below.

1. Who sent the report?_____

2. Name three issues written about in the report.

_____

_____

_____

3. What agency will give low interest loans to help repair the damages from the winter weather?

_____

4. What group will look into the gas shortage?_____

5. How many jobs and what amount of money is promised to seven 1st District towns?

jobs_____ money_____

6. What is the purpose of the bill on the Pine Barrens?

_____

_____

7. Was this report of value to you? Yes_____ No_____
Why or why not?

_____

_____

Congressman **JAMES J. FLORIO**

WASHINGTON REPORT

1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY — WINTER 1977

GAS CRISIS PROBE

The severe winter weather has dealt a heavy blow to South Jersey, causing workers to lose income and property damage reaching nearly $1.5 million in Camden and Gloucester Counties alone.

The combination of frozen waterways and a heavy drain on heating oil and natural gas supplies forced business curtailments and orders from the governor for mandatory compliance with conservation practices.

Some Federal assistance will be available through the Small Business Administration for low interest loans to help repair the damage. I am working to help bring additional assistance as well.

But beyond the problems of the crisis, we need to look at the causes. To find some of the answers, a House subcommittee has launched, at my request, an investigation into the natural gas industry focusing on reports that some suppliers withheld needed fuel in order to benefit from anticipated price increases forced as a result of the crisis.

If this practice is being pursued, it amounts to economic extortion and must be dealt with by the Congress.

The emergency energy legislation that was approved by Congress at President Carter's request provides temporary lifting of price controls on natural gas that is sold across the state lines. As a result, of this and a provision giving the President authority to allocate gas from places with plentiful supplies to places experiencing shortages, the crisis experienced in the northeast began to ease.

But that is only a temporary solution to a continuing problem. There can be no higher priority for the Congress and the Administration for the year ahead than devising more permanent solutions.

U.S. $$ OKd

Nearly $5.8 million has been approved recently for seven First District communities, generating at least 300 jobs and providing needed municipal improvements.

These Public Works grants were approved: Gloucester City—$245,000; Camden City—$3.5 million; Swedesboro $200,000; Runnemede—$275,320, Newfield—$864,000.

The Community Development Block Grant program has provided Chesilhurst with $342,000 and Deptford with $371,000.

Hospital = Jobs

The VA hospital to be built in Camden will provide up to 1000 construction jobs over three years, beginning late in 1979. The hospital itself will provide many permanent positions, including technical, administrative and maintenance jobs, as well as the obvious professional medical positions.

Work on the site is anticipated to begin in early 1978.

Florio Tours Pines, Plans New Bill

I am presently developing legislation designed to conserve the New Jersey Pine Barrens, some 970,000 square acres of wildlands in South Jersey.

The bill will establish a conservation program determined through a federal-state-local government partnership, and is being developed with the assistance of local officials, interested citizens and the U.S. Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

Early in February I toured a portion of the Pine Barrens with Bass River Township Mayor Floyd West and had an opportunity to view the valuable wildlife habitat that must be conserved.

Nutrition Bill Set

I am presently preparing legislation to provide for home-delivered meals to the homebound eiderly, in an effort to help prevent the unnecessary institutionalization of senior citizens.

Malnutrition, caused either by the inability to purchase or prepare food, is often the cause for the aged to enter nursing homes or institutions.

My legislation will help avoid this, and perhaps reduce the annual $9 billion nursing home cost by from $200 to $400 million in the first year.

? QUESTIONNAIRE INSIDE ➡

ACTIVITY F Answering a Congressman's Poll

Congressman James Florio sent this questionnaire to people in his District. Read it. Some of the questions are written in a difficult manner. Some of the words are hard to understand. Your teacher will give you a cassette tape to play as you read it. Answer the questions.

PRIORITIES

1. Which single area of the federal budget should *not* be reduced? (A) Foreign aid; (B) Defense; (C) Welfare; (D) Education; (E) Senior citizens programs; (F) Health programs; (G) Veterans benefits; (H) Housing; (I) Transportation; (J) Environment; (K) Job-creating programs ..... ———

2. What is your second choice? ..... ———

3. What is the single most important problem facing America today? (A) Inflation; (B) Unemployment; (C) Energy shortages; (D) Crime; (E) Pollution; (F) High Taxes; (G) Government corruption; (H) Other ..... ———

4. What is your second choice? ..... ———

EMPLOYMENT

5. Should the Federal government establish a program of public service jobs to help reduce unemployment? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... ———

6. Should the Federal Government establish a Public Works employment program, providing funds for municipal construction projects to increase employment in the private sector? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... ———

7. Should increased tax benefits be granted to private business to encourage expansion and additional employment? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... ———

ENERGY

8. It has been suggested that a comprehensive and coordinated national energy policy is needed. Which of the following should be *excluded* from such a policy? (A) Development of solar and other renewable energy sources; (B) Offshore drilling for oil and natural gas; (C) Deregulation of natural gas and oil products; (D) Nuclear energy expansion; (E) Programs designed to conserve energy ..... ———

9. What is your second choice for elimination? ..... ———

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

10. Do you favor the use of capital punishment? (A) Yes, for all first degree murder offenses; (B) Yes, for very specific murder cases involving skyjacking, treason, terrorist killings, contract killings; (C) No; (D) Undecided ..... ———

VETERANS

11. In what area should Congress concentrate its efforts to improve benefits for veterans? (A) Health care; (B) Education; (C) Employment; (D) Pensions; (E) None benefits are sufficient now ..... _____

12. Do you agree with President Carter's proposal to dedicate a percentage of the new federal jobs programs to Vietnam veterans? (A) Yes; (B) No ..... _____

SOCIAL SECURITY

13. There is concern that revenue from Social Security taxes may be insufficient to assure benefits into the future. What should be done to make sure the fund is secure? (A) Expand payroll taxes into higher income brackets; (B) Use general revenue funds financed by existing income taxes; (C) Neither. No action is necessary. . _____

HEALTH INSURANCE

14. If a national health insurance program is enacted, what form should it take? (A) A comprehensive program, financed and administered by the federal government; (B) Comprehensive, federally financed, but administered by private health insurance industry; (C) Catastrophic coverage only; (D) No program needed ..... _____

PANAMA CANAL

15. Negotiations are now resuming with Panama to determine the future status of the Panama Canal. Do you believe that any final resolution of this issue should: (A) Continue indefinite U.S. control over the Canal Zone; (B) Return control of the Canal to Panama over extended, phased steps; (C) Grant immediate control of the Canal to Panama ..... _____

WELFARE REFORM

16. What action would you like to see taken to improve our welfare system? (A) Provide a guaranteed minimum income for everyone; (B) Provide Federal jobs for those able to work and a minimum guaranteed income for those unable to work; (C) Federalize the system with benefits the same in every state; (D) Retain the existing system .... _____

PINELANDS

17. The New Jersey Pine Barrens constitute a vast area of wildlands and open space. To conserve this area, there is a proposal to create a Federal-State-Local partnership, using Federal funds to determine the area to be protected and to establish a program to do so. A state commission would regulate development through land-management powers. Do you agree with this approach? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ... _____

If you are interested in comparing your answers with members of the 1st District, ask your teacher for them.

Polls and questionnaires are important ways for your law maker to know what you are thinking about. Congressman Florio wrote these words in a recent news letter:

P.S.

Obviously, it's impossible to meet with everyone in person. That's where newsletter like this come in — helping to provide information about what's going on that affects you.

Communications provides an important link between the two of us. You can help, too, by writing to me and expressing your views regarding issues of importance.

Any mail dealing with legislative issues should be directed to me at my Washington office for fastest action.

Jim

He has asked the people in his district to let him know their concerns. He has also given them the chance to get information from him. He has made this very easy by printing a request form like this one.

Please keep me informed regarding the following issues:

- ☐ HEALTH
- ☐ ENVIRONMENT
- ☐ SENIOR CITIZENS
- ☐ ENERGY
- ☐ VETERANS AFFAIRS

To receive copies of the results please complete:

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Zip

(Please Print)

The other side of the form looks like this:

PLEASE PLACE STAMP HERE

Rep. James J. Florio
1726 Longworth Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

To get information, all that people have to do is to check the proper boxes. Then they should sign their name and address, cut out, stamp and mail.

Many legislators send out news letters. What about yours? Does your representative send a news letter? Yes_____ No_____

If not, do you think a news letter would be useful?

Yes_____ No_____

If so, would you be willing to ask that your representative start sending news letters?

Yes_____ No_____

Of course, you do not have to wait to get a news letter with a return coupon. You can take the first step. Contact between citizen and law maker can start with you. You can write a letter to your representative today.

When you do write, remember these points. If you follow them, you will find the letter easy to write. Also, the representative will find your message easy to understand.

Tips for Writing to Legislators *

1. Write a personal note.

   Law makers like handwritten or typed letters more than form letters. It is said that one original letter counts as much as 100 form letters.

2. Include your name, address, and zip code.

3. Be brief and to the point. Stick to one main topic per letter.

4. Be fair and factual.

5. Give the reasons for your opinion. Enclose any background material. Tell of personal experiences.

6. Write to praise the actions of your legislator as well as to criticize.

7. Ask your law maker's position (opinion).

8. Be positive in your approach. Don't threaten to vote your legislator out of office. This is rarely effective.

9. Keep a copy of your letter for your records. You may want to look back to it.

10. Write a follow-up letter to any answer you get. Express thanks for support. Send more information if representative's position is unclear or is against your views.

11. Continue writing your law maker of your concerns.

One possible format for your letter is printed on the opposite page. The format of this letter can be changed and used in writing any lawmaker. Read and study it to prepare for Activity G.

*Adapted from the Tool Catalog; "How to write to your Legislators," published by the American Association of University Women.

A Letter to your Federal Law maker

Suggested Format

Date_____

Address: Honorable_____
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510

Dear Representative/Senator_____

1st paragraph State your concern. Get right to the point. Stay with one issue. Tell why the issue affects you, your family and members of any organizations you belong to.

2nd paragraph State your position. Be brief. Give facts. Request the lawmaker's thoughts on the matter.

3rd paragraph Say "thank you" to the lawmaker for taking time to read the letter. Express hope that the lawmaker will give prompt and favorable consideration to the bill, issue, problem or concern you raised.

Sincerely,

1. Name
2. Address
3. Zip

ACTIVITY G Write your Lawmaker

Law makers want to hear from you. They need to know your views. Use the information you have learned from this booklet. Choose a topic (this could be a proposed law, or your idea for a law, or just some problem). Write a letter to your congressional representative.

Re-read your letter and "rate" it.

What was the main topic?

_____

_____

_____

	Yes	No
1. Did you stick to only one topic?	___	___
2. Did you give facts?	___	___
3. Did you give a personal example?	___	___
4. Were you brief?	___	___
5. Were you clear?	___	___
6. Did you ask for the legislator's opinion?	___	___
7. Did you remember to sign your name and address?	___	___
8. Did you like the tone of your letter?	___	___
9. Do you want to mail it?	___	___

If you have at least 5 "yes" marks, why not copy the letter and mail it today.

If you had less than 5 "yes" marks, you may want to try another draft before sending the letter.

When and Where are Laws Made

Laws are passed by elected officials. They meet in public sessions. The public meetings are held at regular times. They are usually held in the same place each time.

The members of the House and the Senators who make up the U.S. Congress meet in Washington, D.C. Except for short breaks they meet five days a week. Sometimes the House or Senate meets as a whole. On some days members go to committee meetings. It is in the committees that bills are studied. More than half of the committee members must agree to a bill before it is brought to the House or Senate floor.

Often you will see and hear debate on an important bill on the TV news. If you are in Washington, you can sit in on these debates. All you need to do is to ask your law maker for a pass.

In the state capitols, the law making process is like that in Washington. Regular meetings are held. The public can attend. In New Jersey the State law makers meet almost every Monday and Thursday.

But, for most people, a trip to Washington or to Trenton is too far. For you to see how an idea becomes a law, you can attend a local government meeting. Learn when the city council or township meetings are held. Call your town hall or check the local news paper. You will learn more from a visit to city hall if you:

1) Phone first. Make sure that you know the time, date, and place of the meeting.

2) Ask for an "agenda" - a printed list of items to be discussed.

3) Arrive early for the meeting

   a) to get a seat up front
   b) to study the agenda
   c) to watch the council and the visitors

4) Take notes on each agenda item. Write down which members seem to agree and vote together. See which citizen or special interest groups attend and speak.

5) Read a news article on the meeting and compare it with your notes.

6) Get the official minutes of the meeting. These minutes are usually printed a week or two after the meeting.

With these pointers in mind, observe your law makers in action.

ACTIVITY H Observing your Law makers in Action

Attend a city council meeting.
Use this form to report your experience.

1. Meeting attended _____

2. Date and place _____

3. Time meeting began _____ ended _____

4. Number of elected officials _____

5. Number of visitors _____

   How many spoke to the council? _____
   On how many different matters? _____

6. List three of the most important agenda items

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

7. Which agenda item interested you most? Why? _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. Would you have liked to say something to the council?

Yes_____ No _____ Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

9. Were any laws passed? Yes_____ No _____

If so, list them. Tell whether you would have voted for or against them. Give your reasons. (Use a second page if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. How did you feel about the meeting? It was:

very interesting_____ interesting _____ dull_____

11. Would you attend another city meeting? Yes_____ No _____

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How an Idea becomes a Law

Ideas for new laws and for changes in present laws come from many places. Law makers see needs in their own districts. Labor, business and other groups make requests. Constituents - people living in the law maker's district - call or write with ideas and concerns. You, yourself, are a constituent of elected officials in Congress, the State legislature and the town or city council.

By reading this booklet, you have begun to think more about laws. You have read about the many ways laws affect you. You have learned who makes laws at each level of government. You have written your legislator in Washington. You have watched your local law makers at a town or city council meeting.

You have learned certain facts. You have done certain things. So you should feel more comfortable talking with a law maker than you did before. In Activity I, you will make contact with a local law maker. You can tell the official about your idea for a law. Your idea could become a law.

This Activity will be easier for you if you get ready for it. Remember that local law makers work for you. You elected them to represent you. To do this, they need to hear from you. They must know your ideas. You will not be bothering them when you contact them. Instead, you will be helping them to be better law makers. You will be showing them that you are an interested citizen. This is one of the important tasks of a good citizen.

Before talking to your law maker, you will want to plan what you will say. You will want to decide which issue to talk about. For example:

Are you worried about poor roads? Do you know where there is need for a traffic light?

Do you think there ought to be a law on the use of guns, unleashed pets, street parking, etc.?

Briefly, write what you might say:

State the problem from your point of view:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Offer a way to solve the problem (possibly a law to...):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now you are prepared. You are ready to call a council person. Discuss your concern by phone or make an appointment to see the person. Give details of this contact on the next page.

ACTIVITY I Contacting a local official: Your Report.

1. Who did you contact? When? _____
   date

   _____
   name

   _____
   title/office

   _____
   address

2. What problem or issue did you talk about? _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. What did the official say? _____

   _____

   _____

4. What action will be taken as a result of your contact?

   by you _____

   by the representative _____

   _____

5. Was your contact with this official

   satisfactory ___? unsatisfactory ___?

6. Would you contact this official again?

   Yes ___ No ___

   Why or why not?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Now that you have thought more about laws and have contacted law makers, you need to think about how one of your ideas might be written into law. In the next activity you will place yourself in the law maker's role. You will feel "there ought to be a law". You will write a bill - a proposed law. Your bill can be very simply written. But like a real law maker, you will want to be sure that your proposed law is:

constitutional - it is not in conflict with rights under the constitution.

needed - there are not other laws saying the same thing.

good for the majority - it is not good for just a few people.

Study these pointers before writing your bill.

1. Decide on a topic.
2. State the intent of your bill - what it will do - in a simple sentence.
3. Write in separate sections.
   a. What will be done as a result of the bill being passed?
   b. What will the cost be?
   c. When will the bill become effective?
   d. What penalties will be imposed if the law isn't followed?

ACTIVITY J Writing a bill: "There ought to be a law to..."

Using the points on the last page, write a bill.

Title of bill:

_____

_____

Intent of bill:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sections

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Discuss your bill with another person. Give their reaction.

1. Did the person believe your bill was:

	Yes	No
constitutional		
fair		
needed		
good for the most people		
clear		
enforceable		
worth suggesting to a law maker		

2. Write reasons for any 'No' answers.

_____

_____

_____

Did you find it hard to write a bill? If so, that is not surprising. It is hard to draft a good bill. A good bill must be constitutional. It must meet a need. It must be acceptable to more than half of the law makers; otherwise it will not be passed. There are experts - lawyers and other specialists to help the law makers write their bills.

Even with this help, the law making task is a hard one. There are many steps through which a bill must move on its way to becoming a law. During each step, a proposed bill is carefully studied and discussed. Amendments or changes are made during committee meetings and floor debate. If more than half do not support it and even push it along, a bill can become stuck or 'pigeon holed' in the process. It may even die along the way.

The steps in the law making process are the same at the federal and state level. A bill must be:

Introduced and assigned to a committee.

Discussed in and voted out of committee to the floor.

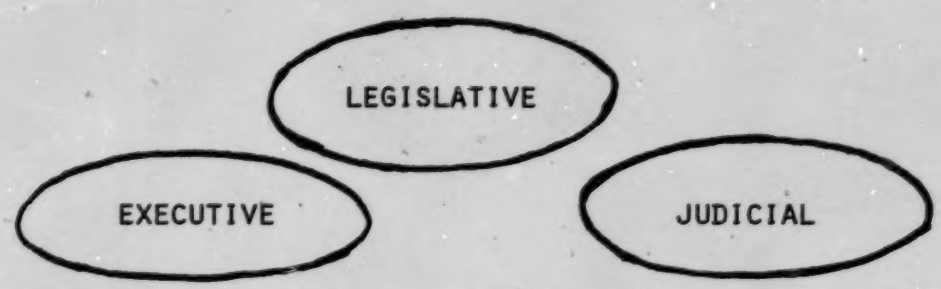
Approved by more than half of the members of that house and sent to the other house. (In this case, we use the word "house" to mean either the Senate or the House of Representatives.)

Sent to the executive (President or Governor) for action.

A bill becomes law if	A bill does not become law if
1) the executive signs it	1) the executive vetoes it
2) the executive holds it more than 10 days without taking action	2) the executive holds it for 10 days and the legislature goes out of session. (This is called a"pocket veto".)
3) the legislature votes by 2/3 to overide an executive veto.	

Did you wonder why the executive (The President or the Governor) was in the law making process? The person in the executive office may sign or may veto a bill. But why should bills pass through this office? Why can't the legislators pass bills without an executive "Yes" or "No"? Don't we elect legislators to make our laws?

The answer to these questions lies in the Constitution. The people who wrote it were afraid of giving too much power to any one part of our government. So they created three separate "branches" of government.



- - The legislative branch passes laws.
- - The executive branch puts laws into action.
- - The judicial branch (or court system) interprets (explains) laws.

In some countries, one or two branches perform these duties. We believe that we need to separate among the branches duties and powers. Then, each branch can check up on the others. No one branch can have too much power. The power of each branch is balanced against the power of the other two. We call these divisions:

- Separation of power
- Checks and balances

They protect us from power hungry officials. They protect our form of government. No one group can rule our nation by itself as long as the other branches can check and limit its actions.

It is hard work to move a bill from its introduction to the point where it becomes a law. Many people work all along the way. They

gather support for it. They keep the bill moving. A bill can not become a law unless a lot of people push for it.

Of course, the legislators have to work for the bill. But other people often work too. These people are called "lobbyists". They try to influence the law makers. When the bill is being studied in a committee, the lobbyists want the members to agree to the bill. Then it can go before the House or the Senate. During the debate in the House or Senate, the lobbyists work, too. They try to get all the law makers to vote for the bill they support. Their bill becomes a law if a majority (more than half of the representatives present) vote for it.

Lobbyists are many different kinds of people. Some are paid to lobby. They may work for large corporations. They may represent labor groups. Education has a lobby group. There are citizen lobby groups, too. By now you have heard of the League of Women Voters. Common Cause is another citizen lobby group. Often these groups are represented by unpaid lobbyists.

Lobbyists give useful information to law makers. They can help the law makers understand complex bills. They can help them learn about the many bills that come up each year. There are too many bills each year for the law makers to understand each one well. Lobbyists can help.

Anyone who works to influence law makers is a lobbyist. You were a lobbyist when you wrote to your law maker. You were lobbying when you phoned your local council person.

If you feel "there ought to be a law," you need to know how to work for it. There are special times when you must work hardest.

Let's look at when and where you as a lobbyist can influence the fate of a bill.

<u>Introduction of a Bill</u>:

Some lobbyists help to write bills. Then they urge the law maker to introduce it.

Committee Assignment:

Some committees have great interest in seeing a bill become a law. Other committees may not like the bill. You must get the legislators to send it to the right committee. You may have to talk with a lot of them to tell them your point of view on this.

Committee Action:

To influence the committee member, lobbyists may

- meet with members
- make a speech to the committee
- suggest amendments to the members

If lobbyists favor the bill, they will push for it. If they are against a bill, they will try to stall it in the committee. Then it can't be voted on by the House or Senate.

Floor Action in the first House:

After a bill is passed by a committee, it goes to the House or Senate for third and final reading. There, lobbyists may

- work for amendments
- try to get the bill passed
- try to stop the bill from being passed

Lobbyists work hard talking with all the legislators. They try to get the law makers of the House or the Senate to agree with them. They try to influence the vote of that House.

Second House:

When a bill is passed by the first House, it goes to the other House. It goes through the same process. Lobbyists work as before. Changes to the bill made in the second House must be passed by the first House. At times, committees from both Houses must work together to write a bill that can be agreed to.

Executive Action:

A lot of work by law makers and lobbyists has gone into getting a bill through both Houses. Next it goes to the Executive branch

of government. This may be the President or, in a state, the Governor. Lobbyists keep working. Now they try to influence the executive. Again, they may be for or against the bill. They try to get the executive to sign the bill into law or to "veto" it. The President vetoes a bill when he refuses to agree to it. (The legislators can overcome a veto if 2/3 of each House votes to pass the law in spite of the veto.)

The chart on the opposite page will help you see how a bill becomes a law. Study it. Recall other facts you have learned. Then answer the following questions:

1. Where do ideas for laws come from?

_____

_____

2. Who helps law makers write bills?

_____

3. What is the purpose of sending a bill to committee?

_____

4. How does a bill get out of committee?

_____

5. What two houses must act on a bill in New Jersey?

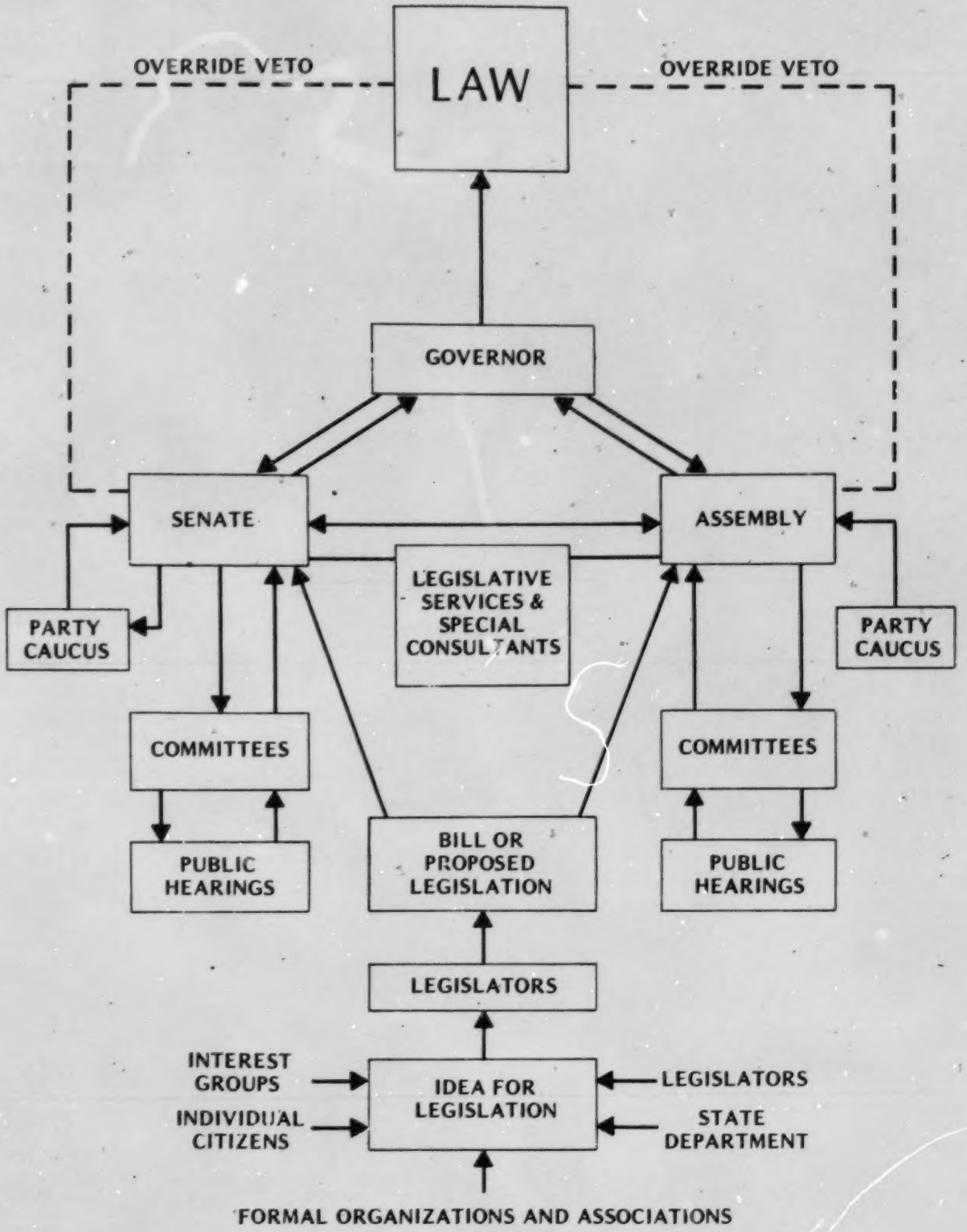
_____ _____

6. If a bill gets to the executive's desk, what action did the legislature take?

_____

_____

_____


LAW
OVERRIDE VETO
OVERRIDE VETO
GOVERNOR
SENATE
ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE SERVICES & SPECIAL CONSULTANTS
PARTY CAUCUS
PARTY CAUCUS
COMMITTEES
COMMITTEES
PUBLIC HEARINGS
BILL OR PROPOSED LEGISLATION
PUBLIC HEARINGS
LEGISLATORS
INTEREST GROUPS
INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS
IDEA FOR LEGISLATION
LEGISLATORS
STATE DEPARTMENT
FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Suppose that the bill which you felt "ought to be a law" went to the State legislature. Suppose also that you, as a lobbyist for the bill, helped to get it passed. Then the Governor signed it. You would expect that your law would remain "on the books" as a law wouldn't you?

But the law might not remain in effect. Remember separation of powers? Remember checks and balances? Suppose the law conflicts with other laws. Suppose the law is contrary to the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. For example, the law might forbid people to read or print certain books. But, the First Amendment protects freedom of the press. In this instance, a citizen or group of people might start a law suit. They might claim that the law passed is unconstitutional. Then the judicial branch - the third branch of government - must decide. It rules on whether or not the law should remain. The court may uphold the law. Or, it may strike down the law. <u>But</u> the court only rules on a law when asked.

The legislature can also review a law it has passed. It can decide if the law is doing what law makers wanted it to do. It can make changes (amendments) to the law. Or, it can repeal ("take off the books") the law. Law makers might repeal a law which people did not like. The 18th Amendment - forbiding drinking was repealed.

You have read about the law making process. You have written to law makers. You have talked with them. You have learned some of the skills needed to influence legislators. Now you know how to make your ideas heard. Citizens <u>can</u> influence law makers.

Now you should be able to talk to people who say:

"You can't fight City Hall."

"Politicians won't listen."

You can tell those people how to be heard. You do it and show them how.

ACTIVITY K Lobby, if you feel "there ought to be a law."

Explain how a person can be a citizen lobbyist.

Who can you see?

Where can you go:

What can you do:

Words to Use

Next to the word in column A, place the number of the correct definition from column B. Then use each word in a sentence.

Column A	Column B
_____lobbyist	1. a discussion held according to rules
_____debate	2. a draft of a law
_____law	3. a person working to influence law making
_____amend	4. a law making body
_____bill	5. a person living in a lawmaker's district
_____constituent	6. a bill passed by a law making body
_____legislature	7. to reject
_____veto	8. to change

1. amend _____

_____

2. bill _____

_____

3. constituent _____

_____

4. law _____

_____

5. legislature _____

_____

6. lobbyist _____

_____

7. debate _____

_____

8. veto _____

_____

IMPORTANT INFORMATION I NEED TO KEEP

1. List the name, address and telephone number of one legislator at each level of government.

   Federal _____

   State _____

   Local _____

2. List three places where you can get information about proposed laws.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. List two ways you can give your views to law makers.

   _____

   _____

4. List the place and time for your city or town council meeting.

   _____

5. Suppose you are going to a city council meeting. List several things you might do: before the meeting, during the meeting and after the meeting.

   before _____

   during _____

   after _____

6. List four points to remember when calling or writing a legislator.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

	Yes	No
1. I will keep up thru TV and newspapers with proposed laws.	☐	☐
2. I will answer polls and questionnaires from my law makers	☐	☐
3. I will phone or write legislators when I feel "there ought to be a law" or when I want to voice my opinions.	☐	☐
4. I will go to local legislative sessions sometimes.	☐	☐

POLITICAL AND LEGAL COPING SKILLS
CITIZEN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT IF...YOU FEEL "THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW"?

--ONE OF A SERIES OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES--
STUDENT BOOKLET - SET II

Katherine L. Wallin
Audrey S. Heinrichs, Ph. D.

Words to Know

amend (v)	to change or correct
amendment(n)	a change or addition 26 Amendments have been made to the U.S. Constitution.
bill	a draft of a law Many bills are introduced in Congress each year.
constitutent	a person living in a law maker's district Elected officials want to hear from their constituents.
law	a bill passed by the lawmaking body Laws are passed by elected representatives.
legislature	a group of elected representatives which passes or vetoes bills written by members of the legislature Many bills are introduced in the legislature each year.
lobbyist	a person who works for either the passage or defeat of a bill Many groups hire lobbyists to work for them at the state capitol.
repeal	to remove a law passed earlier An unpopular or unworkable law can be repealed.
veto	to reject, or disapprove The President can veto a bill.

WHAT IF ... YOU FEEL "THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW?"

If you feel "there ought to be a law", you need to learn certain facts and acquire certain skills. Then, you will be able to influence lawmakers. First, you will want to learn as much as possible about important issues and some of the proposed solutions. Next, you might want to select one major issue to focus your energy on. After that, you will want to find out which lawmakers are also interested in the issue you have chosen. Finally, you will need to get the attention of those legislators. They are the people who should hear your ideas.

To get the interest and attention of lawmakers you will need to learn the skills of lobbying (influencing legislators). The "how to's" of lobbying involve knowing:

- - who to contact
- - how to write an effective letter and make a persuasive call
- - when to bring pressure to bear.

When you use these lobbying skills, you are performing an important task of citizenship: to let your representative know your opinions.

But to be an effective citizen lobbyist, you must also know the "who, what, where, when and how?" of lawmaking.

Who makes laws?

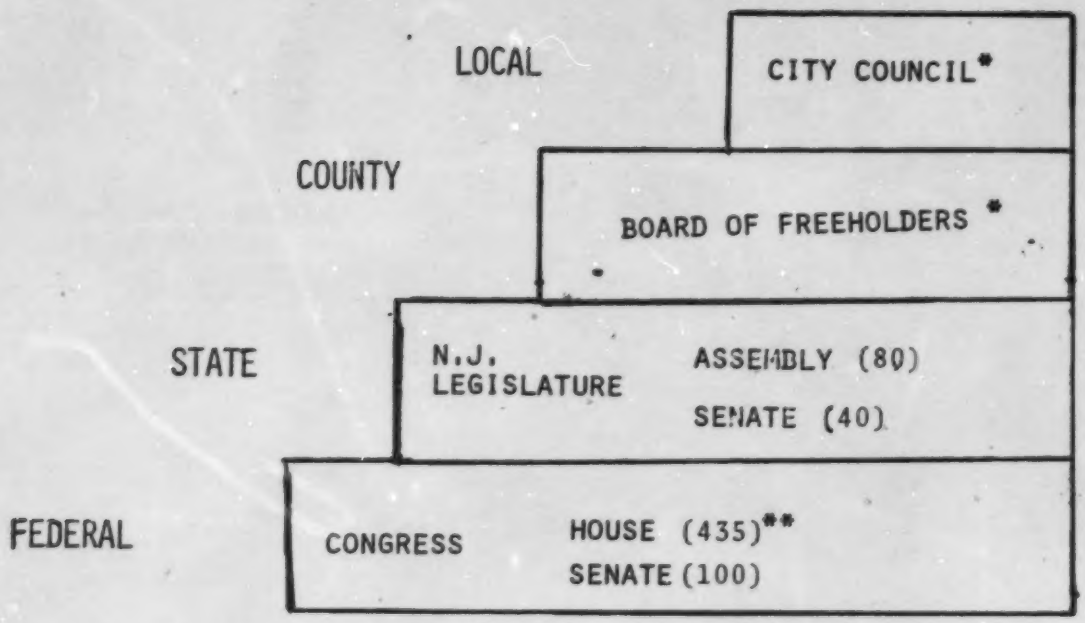
What are laws about?

When and where are laws passed?

How does an idea become a law?

You will learn the answers to these questions in this booklet. With the information you can be a more effective citizen. And you will be able to better influence your representatives, if you feel "there ought to be a law".

LEVELS OF LEGISLATORS



* Number varies. Not less than 3 nor usually more than 9.

** The number is now set at 435 by law. House seats are divided among the 50 states according to the size of their population. After every 10 year federal census, the number of representatives in each state may change.

WHO MAKES LAWS?

Our laws are made for us by people we elect to office. They serve in federal, state, or local legislatures. (See chart on opposite page.)

You will find great variation among these people. They come from different ethnic groups. They have different religious beliefs. And they may be Republicans, Democrats, or Independents. The education they have may range from a high school diploma to a doctoral degree. Among the legislators are lawyers, farmers, professors, business people and workers. They are very different, but they are alike in one important way: they have all been elected to their office. Their job is to represent you and to pass laws for you. Do you know who they are?

Do you know:

who makes the laws affecting your life?

how you can contact these lawmakers?

what committees they serve on?

what your lawmakers think about important issues?

The Activity on the next two pages will help you get this information. You will be studying your legislators at the federal, state, and local level. Some facts can be gotten from your public library. For other facts, you may need to phone the legislator's office. These are ways to learn the positions that your lawmakers have taken on such important issues as:

inflation
employment
taxes
education
energy
pollution

ACTIVITY A Your Lawmakers: Who are They? What is their Stand on important Issues?

*For the following offices, list the name, local district address, phone, political party, years in office, committee assignments, and stand on major issues:

OFFICE	NAME ADDRESS-PHONE	POLITICAL PARTY	YEARS IN OFFICE	COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS	STAND ON ISSUES
U.S. Senators from New Jersey	#1 #2				
U.S. Congressional Representative (Your district)					

State Senator (Your district)					
State Assembly Member (Your district)					
City Council Member (Your City)					

*The public library, the League of Women Voters, and the legislator's office can help you complete this activity.

But not everyone can run for the office of lawmaker or legislator. You must be of a certain age. The age limit depends upon the office. You must be a citizen of the United States. And you must live in the state and district from which you will run for office. In fact, these requirements are like those needed for voting: age, being a citizen, and being a resident.

At the federal level, the U.S. Constitution states the requirements for senator and representative:

To be a senator, you must be:

- at least 30 years old
- a citizen for at least 9 years
- a resident of the state

To be a representative, you must be:

- at least 25 years old
- a citizen for at least 7 years
- a resident of the state and district you will represent.

State constitutions and local laws have requirements like those above. The details may change from state to state, but certain requirements must be met if you wish to be elected to a state or local office. Many states have changed, or amended, their age requirements lately. They now allow anyone 18 years or older to run for legislator. The result has been that younger legislators are being elected.

What do you think about having younger people representing you? And, do you think there should be other requirements for those who run for office? Are age, citizenship, and residency enough as requirements? The next two activities will give you a chance to think about these questions.

ACTIVITY B Is 18 old enough to be a State Representative? What do you think?

In New Jersey, the age of majority - the legal age for voting, entering into a contract, getting married or drinking - is 18 years old. But you have to be 21 years old to be elected to the State Assembly.

Write your opinion on whether or not 18 year olds should be allowed to serve in the Assembly.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Find out the opinions of some other people. Write the opinion of someone who disagrees with you.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you feel strongly enough on this question to write your state law makers?

Yes_____

No _____

ACTIVITY C Qualifications for Lawmakers: - Are age, citizenship and residency requirements enough?

Think about this question. Then write why you agree or disagree with the few present requirements. Can you think what other legal requirements there might be?

Ask another person for their opinion. Write it here:

Compare your opinion with the other person's. Did you agree?

Yes_____ No_____

If not, did either of you change your mind after listening to the other person's opinion?

Yes_____ No_____

What Are Laws About?

Laws are written on many subjects. These laws affect almost every area of our lives. They are made for us by the people we elect to represent us - our legislators. The laws are passed to protect us: our health, our safety, and our general welfare. The subject of these laws may differ according to the level - federal, state or local - at which the lawmaker serves. For example, a U.S. Senator may vote on a law to require food labeling on all cans. A city council member may vote to control unleashed dogs.

In Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, lawmakers pass laws affecting all Americans. Their power to pass laws is written in the U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8. This section says that the members of Congress - the Senate and the House of Representatives - can make all the laws that are "necessary and proper" for carrying out the powers of the Government. The powers were given to the Government by the Constitution. Some of those powers are:

to declare war
to raise an army
to collect taxes
to control trade
to set up post offices
to establish courts
to provide roads
to borrow money

When the Constitution was written, it was not possible to foresee all the laws that might ever be needed. Some specific areas were mentioned, like those above. But the need for

others was not felt at the time. Therefore, the ability of Congress, since then, to make additional laws has depended upon that phrase "can make all the laws that are necessary and proper." Some people call it the elastic clause because it has been interpreted as giving Congress the power to make laws in many areas not listed by the founding fathers.

There may be more laws affecting your life than you imagine. The next activity, You and the Law, calls for thinking about the law and how many laws are part of your everyday life.

ACTIVITY D You and the Law. How much does the law affect your life?

Write a short story about yourself. Describe a typical day, starting with getting up in the morning. Give facts about yourself, your home, your work, and your school.

Reread your story on the last page. List as many things as you can that are affected by law.

For example:

1. Your name - a legal requirement; written on your birth certificate.

2. Your home - affected by zoning laws, - -- What else? Can you name more laws that affect your home?

Legislator Newsletters: Give information on laws / Seek your opinions

Lawmakers want voters to understand major issues. Some write newsletters explaining certain facts. Sometimes they ask you to give your opinions. Your opinions will help the lawmaker represent you.

The activities on the next few pages are based on newsletters sent to voters in the 1st Congressional District in New Jersey. By doing these activities you will understand how lawmakers give information and get your views.

ACTIVITY E "Washington Report" What does it tell the Voter?

Read the 'Report' on the opposite page. There are some hard words in the newsletter. If you can not understand their meaning, ask your teacher for the cassette tape which goes with this activity. Then, answer the questions below.

1. Who sent the report?_____

2. Name three issues written about in the report.

_____

_____

_____

3. What federal agency will give low interest loans to help repair the damages from the winter weather?

_____

4. What group will look into the gas shortage?_____

5. How many jobs and what amount of federal money is promised to seven 1st District towns? jobs_____ money_____

6. What is the purpose of the bill on the Pine Barrens?

_____

_____

7. Was this report of value to you? Yes_____ No_____
Why or why not?

_____

_____

Congressman JAMES J. FLORIO

WASHINGTON REPORT

1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY — WINTER 1977

GAS CRISIS PROBE

The severe winter weather has dealt a heavy blow to South Jersey, causing workers to lose income and property damage reaching nearly $1.5 million in Camden and Gloucester Counties alone.

The combination of frozen waterways and a heavy drain on heating oil and natural gas supplies forced business curtailments and orders from the governor for mandatory compliance with conservation practices.

Some Federal assistance will be available through the Small Business Administration for low interest loans to help repair the damage. I am working to help bring additional assistance as well.

But beyond the problems of the crisis, we need to look at the causes. To find some of the answers, a House subcommittee has launched, at my request, an investigation into the natural gas industry focusing on reports that some suppliers withheld needed fuel in order to benefit from anticipated price increases forced as a result of the crisis.

If this practice is being pursued, it amounts to economic extortion and must be dealt with by the Congress.

The emergency energy legislation that was approved by Congress at President Carter's request provides temporary lifting of price controls on natural gas that is sold across the state lines. As a result, of this and a provision giving the President authority to allocate gas from places with plentiful supplies to places experiencing shortages, the crisis experienced in the northeast began to ease.

But that is only a temporary solution to a continuing problem. There can be no higher priority for the Congress and the Administration for the year ahead than devising more permanent solutions.

U.S. $$ OKd

Nearly $5.8 million has been approved recently for seven First District communities, generating at least 300 jobs and providing needed municipal improvements.

These Public Works grants were approved: Gloucester City—$245,000; Camden City—$3.5 million; Swedesboro—$200,000; Runnemede—$275,320; Newfield—$864,000.

The Community Development Block Grant program has provided Chesilhurst with $342,000 and Deptford with $371,000.

Hospital = Jobs

The VA hospital to be built in Camden will provide up to 1000 construction jobs over three years, beginning late in 1979. The hospital itself will provide many permanent positions, including technical, administrative and maintenance jobs, as well as the obvious professional medical positions.

Work on the site is anticipated to begin in early 1978.

Florio Tours Pines, Plans New Bill

I am presently developing legislation designed to conserve the New Jersey Pine Barrens, some 970,000 square acres of wildlands in South Jersey.

The bill will establish a conservation program determined through a federal-state-local government partnership, and is being developed with the assistance of local officials, interested citizens and the U.S. Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

Early in February I toured a portion of the Pine Barrens with Bass River Township Mayor Floyd West, and had an opportunity to view the valuable wildlife habitat that must be conserved.

Nutrition Bill Set

I am presently preparing legislation to provide for home-delivered meals to the homebound elderly, in an effort to help prevent the unnecessary institutionalization of senior citizens.

Malnutrition, caused either by the inability to purchase or prepare food, is often the cause for the aged to enter nursing homes or institutions.

My legislation will help avoid this, and perhaps reduce the annual $9 billion nursing home cost by from $200 to $400 million in the first year.

? QUESTIONNAIRE INSIDE ➡

ACTIVITY F Answering a Congressman's Poll

Congressman James Florio, sent the following questionnaire to people in the 1st Congressional District. Read it. Some of the questions are written in a difficult manner. Some of the words are hard to understand. If you have trouble understanding what is being asked, your teacher can give you a cassette tape which should help you. Answer the questions.

PRIORITIES

1. Which single area of the federal budget should *not* be reduced? (A) Foreign aid; (B) Defense; (C) Welfare; (D) Education; (E) Senior citizens programs; (F) Health programs; (G) Veterans benefits; (H) Housing; (I) Transportation; (J) Environment; (K) Job-creating programs ..... _____

2. What is your second choice? ..... _____

3. What is the single most important problem facing America today? (A) Inflation; (B) Unemployment; (C) Energy shortages; (D) Crime; (E) Pollution; (F) High Taxes; (G) Government corruption; (H) Other ..... _____

4. What is your second choice? ..... _____

EMPLOYMENT

5. Should the Federal government establish a program of public service jobs to help reduce unemployment? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... _____

6. Should the Federal Government establish a Public Works employment program, providing funds for municipal construction projects to increase employment in the private sector? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... _____

7. Should increased tax benefits be granted to private business to encourage expansion and additional employment? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ..... _____

ENERGY

8. It has been suggested that a comprehensive and coordinated national energy policy is needed. Which of the following should be *excluded* from such a policy? (A) Development of solar and other renewable energy sources; (B) Offshore drilling for oil and natural gas; (C) Deregulation of natural gas and oil products; (D) Nuclear energy expansion; (E) Programs designed to conserve energy ..... _____

9. What is your second choice for elimination? ..... _____

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

10. Do you favor the use of capital punishment? (A) Yes, for all first degree murder offenses; (B) Yes, for very specific murder cases involving skyjacking, treason, terrorist killings, contract killings; (C) No; (D) Undecided ..... _____

VETERANS

11. In what area should Congress concentrate its efforts to improve benefits for veterans? (A) Health care; (B) Education; (C) Employment; (D) Pensions; (E) None benefits are sufficient now ..... _____

12. Do you agree with President Carter's proposal to dedicate a percentage of the new federal jobs programs to Vietnam veterans? (A) Yes; (B) No ..... _____

SOCIAL SECURITY

13. There is concern that revenue from Social Security taxes may be insufficient to assure benefits into the future. What should be done to make sure the fund is secure? (A) Expand payroll taxes into higher income brackets; (B) Use general revenue funds financed by existing income taxes; (C) Neither. No action is necessary. . _____

HEALTH INSURANCE

14. If a national health insurance program is enacted, what form should it take? (A) A comprehensive program, financed and administered by the federal government; (B) Comprehensive, federally financed, but administered by private health insurance industry; (C) Catastrophic coverage only; (D) No program needed ..... _____

PANAMA CANAL

15. Negotiations are now resuming with Panama to determine the future status of the Panama Canal. Do you believe that any final resolution of this issue should: (A) Continue indefinite U.S. control over the Canal Zone; (B) Return control of the Canal to Panama over extended, phased steps; (C) Grant immediate control of the Canal to Panama ..... _____

WELFARE REFORM

16. What action would you like to see taken to improve our welfare system? (A) Provide a guaranteed minimum income for everyone; (B) Provide Federal jobs for those able to work and a minimum guaranteed income for those unable to work; (C) Federalize the system with benefits the same in every state; (D) Retain the existing system .... _____

PINELANDS

17. The New Jersey Pine Barrens constitute a vast area of wildlands and open space. To conserve this area, there is a proposal to create a Federal-State-Local partnership, using Federal funds to determine the area to be protected and to establish a program to do so. A state commission would regulate development through land-management powers. Do you agree with this approach? (A) Yes; (B) No; (C) Undecided ... _____

If you are interested in comparing your answers with members of the 1st District, ask your teacher for them.

Polls and questionnaires are important ways for your representative to know what you are thinking about. Congressman Florio wrote these words in a recent newsletter:

P.S.

Obviously, it's impossible to meet with everyone in person. That's where newsletter like this come in — helping to provide information about what's going on that affects you.

Communications provides an important link between the two of us. You can help, too, by writing to me and expressing your views regarding issues of importance.

Any mail dealing with legislative issues should be directed to me at my Washington office for fastest action.

Jim

He has asked the people in his district to let him know their concerns. He has also given them an opportunity to get information. He has made this very easy by printing a request form like this one.

Please keep me informed regarding the following issues:	To receive copies of the results please complete:
☐ HEALTH	Name _____
☐ ENVIRONMENT	Address _____
☐ SENIOR CITIZENS	_____
☐ ENERGY	Zip
☐ VETERANS AFFAIRS	*(Please Print)*

The other side of the form looks like this:

PLEASE PLACE STAMP HERE

Rep. James J. Florio
1726 Longworth Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

To get information, all citizens have to do is check the boxes, sign their name and address, cut out, stamp and mail.

Many congressional and state representatives send out newsletters What about yours? Does your representative send a newsletter? Yes_____ No_____

If not, do you think a newsletter would be useful?

Yes_____ No_____

If so, would you be willing to ask that your representative start sending newsletters?

Yes_____ No_____

Of course, you do not have to wait to get a newsletter with a return coupon or a questionnaire. You can take the first step. Communication between citizen and lawmaker can start with you. You can write a letter to your representative today.

When you do write, remember these pointers. If you follow them, you will find the letter easier to write. Also, the representative will find your message easier to understand.

Tips for Writing to Legislators *

1. Write a personal note.

   Lawmakers are more impressed by original handwritten or typed letters than form letters. It is said that one original letter counts as much as 100 form letters.

2. Include your name, address, and zip code.

3. Be brief and to the point. Stick to one main topic per letter.

4. Be fair and factual.

5. Give the reasons for your opinion. Enclose any background material. Tell of personal experiences.

6. Write to praise the actions of your legislator as well as to criticize.

7. Ask your legislator's position.

8. Be positive in your approach. Don't threaten to vote your legislator out of office. This is seldom an effective tactic.

9. Keep a copy of your letter for your records. You may want to refer back to it.

10. Write a follow-up letter to the answer your representative will almost surely send you. Express thanks for support. Send more information if representative's position is unclear or is opposed to your views.

11. Continue writing your legislature of your concerns.

One possible format for your letter is printed on the opposite page. The format of this letter can be changed and used in writing any lawmaker. Read and study it to prepare for Activity G.

* Adapted from the Tool Catalog; "How to write to your Legislators," published by the American Association of University Women.

A Letter to your Federal Lawmaker

Suggested Format

Date_____

Address: Honorable_____
U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510

Dear Representative/Senator_____

1st paragraph State your concern. Get right to the point. Stay with one issue. Tell why the issue affects you, your family and members of any organizations you belong to.

2nd paragraph State your position. Be brief. Give facts. Request the lawmaker's thoughts on the matter.

3rd paragraph Say "thank you" to the lawmaker for taking time to read the letter. Express hope that the lawmaker will give prompt and favorable consideration to the bill, issue, problem or concern you raised.

Sincerely,

1. Name
2. Address
3. Zip

ACTIVITY G Write your Lawmaker

Lawmakers want to hear from you. They need to know your views. Using the information you have learned from this booklet, choose a topic (this could be a proposed law, or your idea for a law, or just some concern). Write a letter to your congressional representative.

Re-read your letter and "rate" it.

What was the main topic?

_____

_____

_____

	Yes	No
1. Did you stick to only one topic?	___	___
2. Did you give facts?	___	___
3. Did you give a personal example?	___	___
4. Were you brief?	___	___
5. Were you clear?	___	___
6. Did you ask for the legislator's opinion?	___	___
7. Did you remember to sign your name and address?	___	___
8. Did you like the tone of your letter?	___	___
9. Do you want to mail it?	___	___

If you have at least 5 "yes" marks, why not copy the letter and mail it today.

If you had less than 5 "yes" marks, you may want to try another draft before sending the letter.

When and Where are laws Made?

Laws are passed by elected officials meeting in public sessions to make decisions. The public meetings are held regularly - usually in the same place and at the same time.

The 435 House members and the 100 Senators who make up the U.S. Congress meet in Washington, D.C. Except for short recesses (vacations) they meet five days a week. When the House or Senate is not meeting as a whole, members go to committee meetings. It is there that bills, proposed laws, are studied and discussed. No bill is brought to the House or Senate floor until a majority of the committee members have approved it.

Often you will see and hear on the television news, committee or floor debate on an important bill. If you are in Washington, you can sit in on these discussions. All you need do is ask your representative for a visitors pass.

The legislative process is similar in the fifty state capitols. Legislators meet regularly and the public is welcome to attend. New Jersey residents can see their 120 legislators in action almost every Monday and Thursday.

Unfortunately, for most people, a trip to Washington or to a state capitol is too far and too expensive. So if you want to see where and how an idea becomes a law it will be easier for you to attend a city council or township meeting. You can learn when your city officials meet by calling your town hall or checking your local newspaper. A visit to city hall will be more interesting if you:

1) Call to confirm the time, date and place of the meeting.

2) Ask for an agenda - a printed list of items to be discussed.

3) Arrive early for the meeting
   a) to get a seat up front
   b) to study the agenda
   c) to watch the council and the visitors.

4) Take notes on each agenda item. Write down which members seem to agree and vote together. Also, see which citizen or special interest groups attend and speak.

5) Read a news article on the meeting and compare it with your notes.

6) Get the official minutes of the meeting. These minutes are usually printed a week or two after the meeting.

With these pointers in mind, observe your lawmakers in action.

ACTIVITY H Observing your Lawmakers in Action

Attend a city council meeting.
Use this form to report your experience.

1. Meeting attended _____

2. Date and place _____

3. Time meeting began _____ ended _____

4. Number of elected officials _____

5. Number of people in the audience _____

   Of this number, how many spoke to the council? _____
   on how many different matters? _____

6. List three of the most important agenda items

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

7. Which agenda item interested you most and why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Would you have like to say something to the council?
Yes_____ No_____ Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Were any laws passed? Yes_____ No _____

If so, list them and tell whether you would have voted for or against them. Give your reasons. (Use a second page if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What was your reaction to the meeting?

very interesting_____ interesting_____dull_____

11. Would you attend another city meeting? Yes_____ No _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How an Idea becomes a Law

Ideas for either new laws or changes in present laws come from many places. Lawmakers see needs in their own districts - areas they represent. Labor, business and special interest groups offer suggestions. Constituents - residents of the representative's district - call or write with ideas and concerns. You are a constituent of elected officials in Congress, the State legislature and the city council.

By reading this booklet, you have begun to think more about laws. You have read about the many ways laws affect you. You have learned who makes laws at each level of government. You have written your representative in Washington. You have watched your local decision makers at a city council meeting.

You have learned certain facts. You have done certain activities. As a result, you should feel more confident about actually talking with a lawmaker, especially at the local level. By doing Activity I, you will have a chance to contact a local decision maker. You can tell the official about your idea for a law. Your idea could become a law.

This activity will be easier for you if you prepare for it. Remember that local lawmakers work for you. You elected them to represent you. To do so, they need to hear from you. They need to know your ideas. You will not be bothering them when you contact them. Instead, you will be helping them be better representatives. You will be showing them that you are an interested citizen. You will be performing one of the important tasks of good citizenship.

Before talking directly to your lawmaker, you will want to plan what you will say. You will want to decide on the issue or problem. For example:

> Are you worried about poor roads, or the need for a traffic light, etc?
>
> Do you think there ought to be a law on the use of guns, unleashed pets, street parking, etc.?

Briefly, write what you might say:

State the problem from your point of view:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Offer a solution (possibly a law to...):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

With this preparation, you are ready to call a council person. Discuss your concern by phone or make an appointment to see the person. Give details of this contact on the next page.

ACTIVITY I Contacting a local official: Your Report.

1. Who did you contact? When? _____
   date

   _____
   name

   _____
   title/office

   _____
   address

2. What problem or issue did you talk about?_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. What did the official say?_____

   _____

   _____

4. What action will be taken as a result of your contact?

   by you_____

   by the representative_____

   _____

5. Was your contact with this official?

   satisfactory ___ unsatisfactory ___

6. Would you contact this official again?

   Yes ___ No ___

   Why or why not?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Now that you have thought more about laws and have contacted lawmakers, you need to think about how one of your ideas might be written into law. In the next activity you will place yourself in the lawmaker's role. You will feel "there ought to be a law". You will write a bill - a proposed law. Your bill can be very simply written. But like a real lawmaker, you will want to be sure that your proposed law is:

constitutional - it is not in conflict with rights under the constitution.

needed - there are not other laws saying the same thing.

good for the majority - it is not good for just a few people.

Study these pointers before writing your bill.

1. Decide on a topic.
2. State the intent of your bill-

   what it will do - in a simple sentence.
3. Write in separate sections.

   a. What will be done as a result of the bill being passed?

   b. What will the cost be?

   c. When will the bill become effective?

   d. What penalties will be imposed if the law isn't followed?

ACTIVITY J Writing a bill: "There ought to be a law to..."

Using the pointers on the previous page, draft a bill.

Title of bill:

Intent of bill:

Sections

Discuss your bill with another person. Give their reaction.

1. Did the person believe your bill was:

	Yes	No
constitutional		
fair		
needed		
good for the most people		
clear		
enforceable		
worth suggesting to a law maker		

2. Write reasons for any 'No' answers.

Did you find it hard to write a bill? If so, that is not surprising. It is hard to draft a good bill. A good bill must be constitutional. It must meet a need. It must be acceptable to a majority of the law makers; otherwise it will not be passed. Your representatives have experts - lawyers and special consultants - to help them write their bills.

Even with this help, the law making task - the passage of bills - is a difficult one. There are many steps through which a bill must move on its way to becoming a law. During each step, a proposed bill is thoughtfully studied and discussed. Amendments or changes are made during committee meetings and floor debate. If a majority do not support it and even push it along, a bill can become stuck or 'pigeon holed' in the process. It may even die along the way.

The steps in the lawmaking process are similar at the federal and state level. Very simply stated, a bill must be:

Introduced and assigned to a committee.

Voted out of committee to the floor.

Approved by a majority of the members of that House and sent to the other chamber.

Sent to the executive (President or Governor) for action.

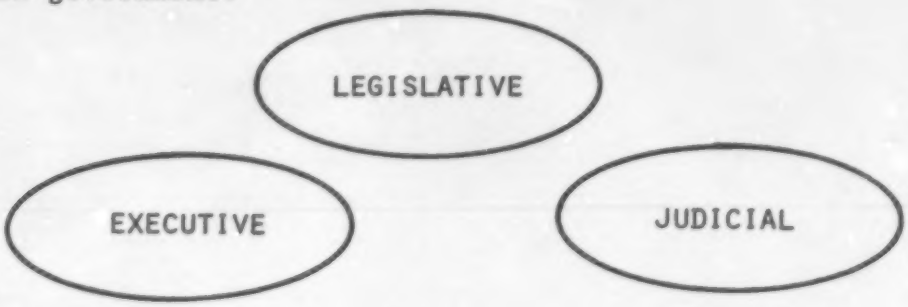
- - A bill becomes law if
  1) the executive signs it
  2) the executive holds it more than 10 days without taking action
  3) the legislature votes by 2/3 to overide an executive veto

- - A bill does not become law if
  1) the executive vetoes it
  2) the executive holds it for 10 days and the legislative adjourns, goes out of session. (This procedure is called a pocket veto.)

The fact that a bill is sent to the executive for action is an example of two important constitutional concepts:

- - separation of power
- - checks and balances

The founding fathers of our country decided to divide power among the branches of government. They did this so that no one group of officials would have too much power. This division is called separation of power. Dividing power among the three branches - legislative, executive and judicial - is a basic concept of our form of government.



Each branch has its constitutional duties. At the federal level:

- - The legislative (Congress) passes laws.
- - The executive (the President) administers and enforces laws.
- - The judicial (the Supreme Court) interprets laws.

Each of the three branches is independent. It has its own responsibilities. But each branch is checked by the other two branches. It can't act alone. For example, Congress may pass a bill, but the bill may not become law because of action by either the President or the Supreme Court. The President has the power to veto (say "no" to) the bill. The Supreme Court can rule that a bill is unconstitutional (not legal according to the Constitution). Each one of the three branches of government checks and balances the other two parts. Thus, no one branch can gain complete control of the government.

Moving a bill through the legislature from introduction to final vote takes time and energy. Legislators, including the writers of the bill and supporters, must work hard. People other than elected representatives are also involved. These people, called "lobbyists", try to influence the lawmaking process. These people may be paid to represent a point of view such as labor, business, or education. No doubt you have heard of such powerful lobbyists groups as the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Education Association. Citizen lobby groups, some using unpaid volunteers, include the League of Women Voters and Common Cause. Lobbyists give important information to legislators. This can help lawmakers understand complex issues.

Actually, anyone who works to influence the legislative process is a lobbyist. You were acting as a lobbyist when you wrote to your representative in Washington and called your local council person.

If you are interested in affecting legislation because you feel "there ought to be a law," you must know when to apply pressure. You should understand when your influence is most needed.

Let's look at the legislative process from a lobbyist's point of view. When and where can the lobbyist influence lawmakers:

Introduction of Bill:

Some lobbyists work closely with legislators in writing bills. When completed, they urge the law maker to introduce the bill.

Committee Assignment:

Lobbyists often try to influence which committee a bill will be sent to. Those in favor of a bill want it in a committee with the most supporters. Those in opposition might attempt to have the bill assigned to a less friendly committee.

Committee Hearings/Action:

Lobbyists meet informally with committee members. They also give formal presentations during the hearings. If lobbyists want amendments to a bill, they suggest changes. If a lobbying group supports a bill they will work to get it voted out of committee. If a group opposes a bill, they will want to get the bill "stalled" or kept in committee. To do this, they may bring up as many questions as possible. They may try to split the committee so that there is no agreement on the bill. Then it can not be voted out for floor debate.

Floor Action in House of Origin:

A bill up for third and final reading can be amended. Lobbyists still wanting changes will try to persuade legislators to make amendments. Lobbyists satisfied with the bill the way it was reported from committee will push for an immediate vote.

Second House:

Once a bill has passed the House in which it originated (started), it must be considered by the other chamber (house). The bill goes through the same process:

introduction
first reading
committee hearing and action
second and third readings
debate
vote

Lobbyists work as before. If they are successful in making changes to the bill, the bill must be sent back to the House of origin. The amendments must be approved.

Conference Committee:

Sometimes the two houses have difficulty in reaching an agreement over a bill. Then a conference committee is formed. If it can not reach agreement, the bill dies. If it does come up with a report and a compromise bill, both houses must vote on the bill. Throughout the process, lobbying efforts are intense.

Executive Action:

Once a bill has passed both houses, it goes to the executive. Lobbying activity either for or against the bill continues until the executive has either approved or vetoed the bill.

The chart on the opposite page will help you review how a bill becomes a law. Study it. Recall other facts you have learned. Then answer the following questions:

1. Where do ideas for legislation come from?

_____

_____

_____

2. Who helps legislators write bills?

_____

3. What is the purpose of sending a bill to committee?

_____

4. How does a bill get out of committee?

_____

5. What two houses must act on a bill in New Jersey?

_____ _____

6. Why would members of each political party meet alone (in party caucus)? What might they decide?

_____

_____

7. If a bill comes to the governor's desk, what action was taken by the legislature?

_____

8. What choices does the executive have when a bill is received?

_____

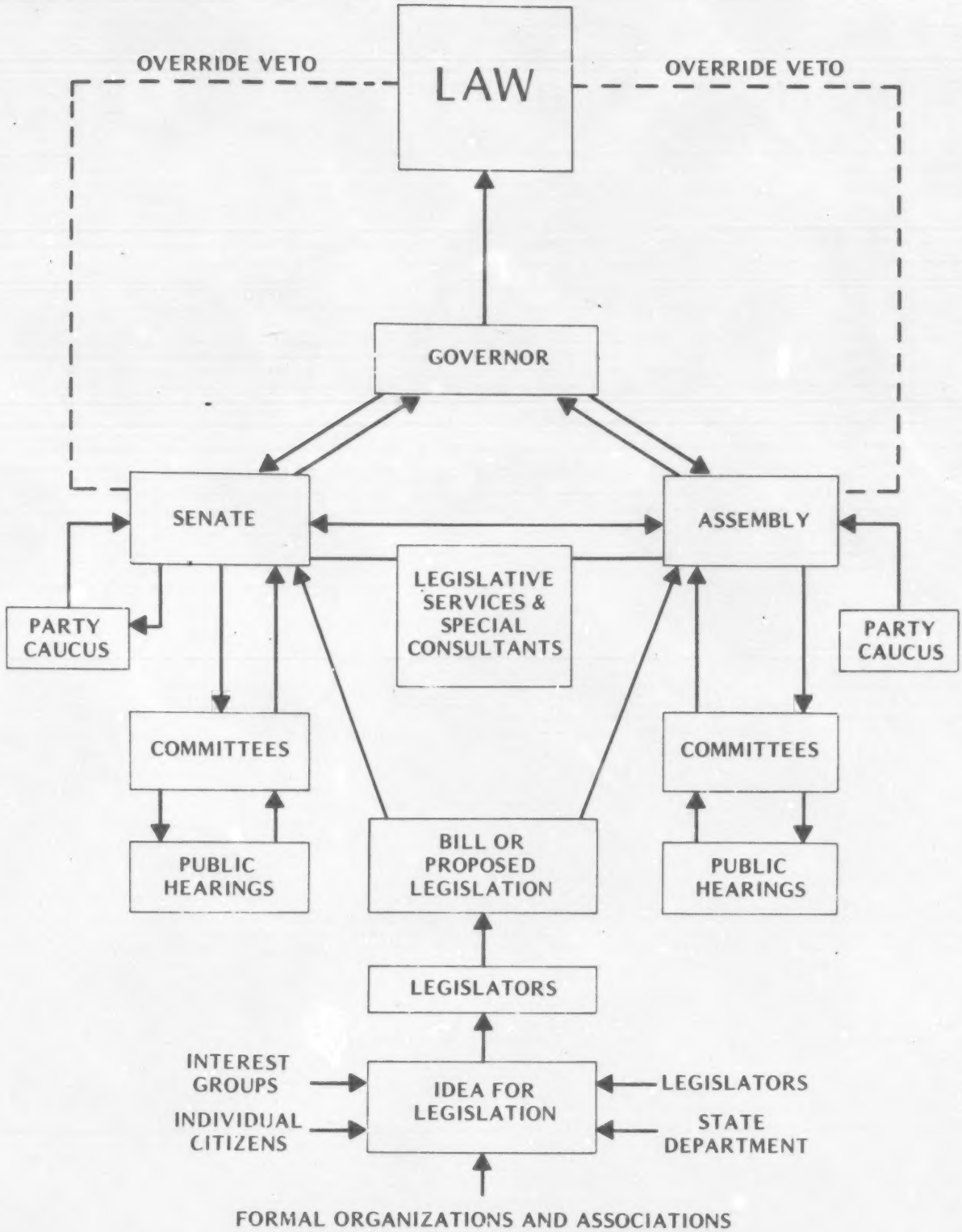
_____

_____

9. Write why you think the legislature can overide an executive veto?

_____

_____


LAW
OVERRIDE VETO
OVERRIDE VETO
GOVERNOR
SENATE
ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE SERVICES & SPECIAL CONSULTANTS
PARTY CAUCUS
PARTY CAUCUS
COMMITTEES
COMMITTEES
PUBLIC HEARINGS
BILL OR PROPOSED LEGISLATION
PUBLIC HEARINGS
LEGISLATORS
INTEREST GROUPS
INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS
IDEA FOR LEGISLATION
LEGISLATORS
STATE DEPARTMENT
FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Normally the legislative process is complete after executive action. The law either becomes a law or it does not. However, once a law is passed, the judicial branch might be asked to rule on its constitutionality. This could happen if an individual or group of persons started a law suit. They would ask for a court ruling. The court could rule to uphold the law or strike it down. In doing so, the court would be acting in its constitutional role of interpreting the law. But, remember the court only rules on a law if requested to do so. Otherwise, only the legislative and executive branches are involved in the legislative process.

The legislature can review how effective a law is. If a law is not doing what the legislators intended, amendments to that law can be passed. Or the law can even be repealed, "taken off the books." This might be necessary if the law did not have public support and was not enforceable. For example, the 18th Constitutional Amendment prohibiting drinking was repealed.

You have read about the legislative process. You have learned important facts about the process. You have written to law makers. You have talked with them. By doing so, you have developed some of the skills necessary for citizens to influence decision making and law making. With your new knowledge and skills, you should have greater confidence in the power of your vote and voice.

You should be able to explain to people who say "You can't fight City Hall" or "Politicians won't listen" that they are wrong. You should be able to convince people with such negative views that:

- - citizens can be heard.
- - citizens can make a difference.
- - citizens can influence the legislative process if they believe "there ought to be a law."

ACTIVITY K Lobby, if you feel "there ought to be a law."

Explain how a person can be a citizen lobbyist.

Who can you see?

Where can you go:

What can you do:

Words to Use

Next to the word in column A, place the number of the correct definition from column B. Then use each word in a sentence.

Column A	Column B
_____lobbyist	1. to cancel
_____repeal	2. a draft of a law
_____law	3. a person working to influence law making
_____amend	4. a law making body
_____bill	5. a person living in a lawmaker's district
_____constituent	6. a bill passed by a law making body
_____legislature	7. to reject
_____veto	8. to change

1. amend _____

_____

2. bill _____

_____

3. constituent _____

_____

4. law _____

_____

5. legislature _____

_____

6. lobbyist _____

_____

7. repeal _____

_____

8. veto _____

_____

IMPORTANT INFORMATION I NEED TO KEEP

1. List the name, address and telephone number of one legislator at each level of government.

   Federal _____

   State _____

   Local _____

2. List three places where you can get information about proposed laws.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. List two ways you can give your views to law makers.

   _____

   _____

4. List the place and time for your city or town council meeting.

   _____

5. Suppose you are going to a city council meeting. List several things you might do: before the meeting, during the meeting and after the meeting.

   before _____

   during _____

   after _____

6. List four pointers to remember when contacting a legislator.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

	Yes	No
1. I will keep up thru TV and newspapers with proposed laws.	☐	☐
2. I will answer polls and questionnaires from my legislators.	☐	☐
3. I will contact my legislators when I feel "there ought to be a law or when I want to voice my opinions.	☐	☐
4. I will go occasionally to local legislative sessions.	☐	☐